

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 143 173

EC 101 851

AUTHOR Passow, A. Harry; And Others
TITLE Similarities and Differences Among Young Gifted Children Who Did or Did Not Participate in an Early Intervention Program.
INSTITUTION Columbia Univ., New York, N.Y. Teachers College.
SPONS AGENCY Vincent Astor Foundation, New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE Aug 77
NOTE 45p.
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.83 HC-\$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Early Childhood Education; Exceptional Child Research; *Gifted; *Intervention; *Program Effectiveness

ABSTRACT

To determine the effectiveness of the Astor Program, an early intervention program for children aged 4 years and above who show unusual evidence of academic ability, 28 Astor children and 24 control children equally qualified as gifted were compared. The children were tested with the Stanford-Binet Test, the Goodenough Draw-a-Man Test, and the Wide Range Reading and Arithmetic Test. They were interviewed for their perceptions concerning school, home, peer relationships, cultural resources, and self. Parents were interviewed concerning their children's development and behavior in school, at home, and in the neighborhood. Parents also completed a rating form on personal traits and characteristics of their children. In general, there appeared to be more similarities than differences between Astor and nonAstor program children. (Author/SBH)

* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *

ED143173

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES AMONG YOUNG GIFTED CHILDREN WHO
DID OR DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN AN EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

A. Harry Passow
John S. Klein
Ahmed Mead

Teachers College, Columbia University
New York, New York 10027

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

A. Harry Passow

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND
THE ERIC SYSTEM CONTRACTORS."

This study was undertaken with a grant from
THE VINCENT ASTOR FOUNDATION
New York, New York

August 1977

EC10185

A B S T R A C T

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES AMONG YOUNG GIFTED CHILDREN WHO DID OR DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN AN EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

A. Harry Passow, John Klein, and Ahmed Mead

The Astor Program is a program for children aged 4 and above who show unusual evidence of academic ability. In selecting children for the first two Astor Program classes (opened in March 1974) a number of children, equally qualified as gifted, were not accepted for one reason or another. The question posed was: Do children who are equally gifted but who were not provided with an experience such as that made possible by the Astor Program suffer as a result?

The intent was to locate 30 Astor Program children and an equal number of Non-Astor Program children (i.e., qualified but not admitted) and match them on a one-to-one basis. Of the 37 Astor Program identified, 28 participated in the study. A total of 24 Non-Astor Program children were identified from which a total of 12 participated in the study. Those children who did not participate either could not be located or their parents refused to cooperate.

The children were tested with the Stanford-Binet Test of Intelligence, the Goodenough Draw-a-Man Test, the Wide Range Reading and Arithmetic Test (reading, spelling, arithmetic). They were interviewed for their perceptions concerning school, home, peer relationships, cultural resources, and self-perceptions. Their parents were interviewed concerning their children's development and behavior in school, at home, and in the neighborhood. The parents completed a rating form on personal traits and characteristics of their children.

Because of the sample limitations, statistical treatment of the data seemed inappropriate. In general, there appear to be more similarities than differences between the Astor Program and Non-Astor Program children. However, to draw the conclusion that the Non-Astor Program children did not suffer in their development as a consequence of not participating in the Astor Program is not warranted because of the inadequacy of the sample and, equally important, the limitations in the data collected. Further, the Astor Program presumably emphasized many additional skills and behaviors which were not assessed.

Although it is not possible to answer the question posed, data are now available on a group of forty young intellectually gifted children--a sample and data bank far larger than have been available on young gifted children.

We are grateful to The Vincent Astor Foundation for providing the funds for undertaking this study.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES AMONG YOUNG GIFTED CHILDREN WHO
DID OR DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN AN EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

A. Harry Passow, John Klein, and Ahmed Mead

Teachers College, Columbia University

On August 15, 1973, The Vincent Astor Foundation awarded a grant to the Board of Education of New York City "to promote research and education for the gifted in the New York City public school system." Among the activities to be undertaken by the schools was implementation of a program for children aged 4 and above who showed unusual evidence of academic ability. The initiator of the proposal, Dr. Virginia Z. Ehrlich, became the Project Director of the Astor Gifted Child Studies Program.

The Fall 1973 period was devoted to preparing for the early learner classes. Two sites were selected-- P.S. 116 Manhattan in District 2, and P.S. 114 Brooklyn in District 18. Four teachers were chosen, two for each school, and plans were made to select two more teachers during the Spring Term. As of January 31, 1974, approximately 300 children had been screened and 35 had been found eligible for the program. In collaboration with the teachers, curricula in reading, science, and social living were developed. Specialists in early childhood education, curriculum, and guidance helped explore guidelines for classroom management. A teacher training program was planned to commence in February 1974.

After several delays, the two Astor Program classes were opened in Spring 1974. The P.S. 116-M class consisted of 21 pupils (11 boys

and 10 girls) and P.S. 114-K included 22 pupils (12 boys and 10 girls). The intent was to have about 30 pupils in each class but, for a variety of reasons, this hope was not immediately realized. Between late January and early February, the total number of pupils screened approached 500. As Dr. Ehrlich reported:

Criteria for selection are a topic of continuing review by the program. The development of valid criteria for identifying any population is a lengthy procedure requiring extensive research. We have, in the Program, been faced with the necessity of making rather quick decisions for the first classes, if we were to begin at all. Therefore, our selection procedure is based in part on expediency, controlled by our present knowledge of identification techniques.

The children were brought to the attention of The Astor Program staff through: (a) concerned parents, (b) teachers, principals, guidance counselors, and other interested personnel, and (c) recommendations by psychologists and test guidance services. The screening committee was guided by a list of characteristics usually associated with gifted children (e.g., ability to read, early signs of developmental maturity, unusual memory, etc.). Potential candidates for the program were given a Stanford-Binet Test of Intelligence and a Goodenough Draw-a-Man Test. Both the child and his parent(s) were interviewed. The age range of the children selected was from four years to five years and six months. The IQ scores (Stanford-Binet) ranged from 140 to 170+.

Three teachers were actually employed as of February 1, 1974 and the fourth teacher was not hired until March 18th. Two educational assistants were hired in March. The staff was involved in a series of in-service training programs and was engaged in curriculum development activities. The P.S. 114-K class actually started on March 4, 1974 while the P.S. 116-M class began on March 25th. The youngsters attended class for

four hours daily. Parents were involved in many aspects of the program.

In the years since the first two classes were started, the Astor Program has expanded to a number of schools and school districts throughout the city. The "original" Astor Program classes have been maintained, although there have been some dropouts and some replacements, as well as additions to bring the class rosters closer to the intended number of thirty. The two Astor Program classes which were begun in March 1974 are now designated as the "Level III" classes.

Statement of the Problem

The Astor Program to date has not involved systematic evaluation efforts although a grant from The Vincent Astor Foundation for 1977-78 will permit Dr. Virginia Z. Ehrlich to organize the comprehensive data which have been collected over the years since the program's inception. For instance, during the first year of the program, data collected included: initial test results, teacher observations, psychological observations, and parents' reactions. These data should provide useful information about the consequences of an early intervention program on a sample of gifted young children.

In a report to The Vincent Astor Foundation in May 1976 following visits and observations of the two original classes, the question was raised concerning the consequences of participation in such classes for prekindergartners and kindergartners as compared with children of equal potential who do not have such an experience. Among the children originally tested in January and February 1974 were some whose parents had applied for admission, who were qualified as gifted but, for one reason or another,

were not accepted into the program. Since there are relatively few programs which provide especially for very young gifted children, it could be presumed that these youngsters were enrolled in "normal" classes, if they were enrolled at all. The question posed was: Do children who are equally gifted but who were not provided with an experience such as that made possible by the Astor Program suffer as a result?

The intent of the study was to select approximately 30 "Level III" Astor Program children, pupils who had been enrolled in the program from the start, and match them with 30 children who met the qualifications for admission but who were not enrolled in the classes for one reason or another. After the study was initiated, however, it became clear that it was not possible to locate 30 students from each population nor would it be possible to match them on a one-to-one basis. Nevertheless, it was clear that even the limited sample which could be obtained would provide data on a population of young gifted children that were not available elsewhere. Also, it became apparent that the data which could be collected were not as comprehensive as planned for originally. Consequently, the limitations of the study-- limitations which will be detailed later-- caused modification of the original design to that of an exploratory pilot study, one which does not lend itself to any statistical treatment of the data but which, nevertheless, provide findings which are both interesting and provocative.

Design of the Study

As indicated earlier, the original plan was to use the records of the Astor Gifted Child Studies Program to locate 30 children from the two original Astor Program classes (i.e., children admitted to the first two classes in March 1974) and an equal number of children who were

equally qualified but were not accepted for membership in the classes. The parents were to be invited to cooperate in the study by: (a) responding to questions in an interview concerning the development of the child, (b) completing a rating form on the traits/characteristics of the child, and (c) approve the school's making available the child's academic records to the study staff. The children were to: (a) be tested with the Stanford-Binet Test of Intelligence, the Goodenough Draw-a-Man Test, and the Wide Range Reading and Arithmetic Test and (b) respond to questions in an interview concerning their development and preferences.

A total of 37 Astor Program original "Level III" children were identified from which a total of 28 participated in the study. A total of 24 Non-Astor Program children were identified from which a total of 12 participated in the study. Those children who did not participate either could not be located or the parents refused to cooperate. Some of the Non-Astor Program parents who refused to participate in the study were still unhappy that their children had not been selected.

With the exception of the administration of Stanford-Binet tests to the Astor Program children, all of the testing and interviewing of the children was done by one staff member. The psychologist from the Astor Program staff tested the intelligence of the "Level III" children as part of their assessment program. Parental permission to examine the children's school records was granted by about half of the parents and came so late in the school year as to make it impractical to study these records. The Parent Rating Form used was one which drew heavily on a form designed by Dr. Ehrlich of the Astor Program.

Two interview schedules were developed-- one for children and

the other for parents. The interview for the children aimed at eliciting data concerning school behaviors and attitudes, home behaviors and attitudes, and self-perceptions. The parental interview aimed at determining the parent's perceptions of the child's behavior and performance at home and in school, his/her growth and development, the kinds of nurturing activities provided, and the satisfaction with the schooling experience.

Findings from Children Related to School and Achievement

The data from the tests are contained in Table 1 for the Astor Program children and Table 1a for the Non-Astor children. The means and standard deviations (for some scores) for the groups are displayed in Table 2. Using a t-test with some of the group scores where appropriate, no statistically significant differences were found.

The mean age for the Astor Program (AP) children at the time of the study was 8-0; for the Non-Astor Program (NAP) children, the mean age was 7-6. Thus, the mean age for the NAP sample (n=12) was six months younger than that for the AP sample (n=28). The mean IQ for the NAP group on the 1977 testing was 132 (S.D. 8.28); for the AP group, the mean IQ was 137.35 (S.D. 13.04). These IQ scores are based on Stanford-Binet testing. As measured by the Goodenough Draw-a-Person Test the current intellectual functioning of both groups was in the superior range. The mean IQ of the AP children on the Draw-a-Person test was 125 (S.D. 12)-- slightly but not significantly higher than the mean IQ of 121 (S.D. 19) for the NAP children. Although there was considerable variability within each of the groups, the two groups seemed not to differ on the factors measured by the test. As indicated by the means, the Draw-a-Person IQ scores tended to be lower than the Stanford-Binet scores.

Table 1
1974 and 1977 IQ Scores and Reading, Spelling, and Arithmetic
Scores for Astor Program Children (n=28)

Child	Age	1974 IQ	1977 IQ	Reading	Spelling	Arithmetic
A	7-2	142	144	58 (10.2) [160]	21 (6.7) [160]	29 (3.6) [121]
B	7-6	134	134	34 (5.4) [136]	9 (3.3) [107]	31 (4.2) [107]
C	8-10	151	108	49 (8.1) [151]	12 (4.3) [108]	31 (4.2) [107]
D	7-10	142	149	43 (6.9) [156]	14 (4.9) [129]	31 (4.2) [119]
E	8-5	130	137	38 (6.2) [133]	18 (6.1) [132]	33 (4.7) [116]
F	8-2	159	149	46 (7.5) [148]	n.a.	n.a.
G	8-6*	137	158	46 (7.5) [144]	15 (5.2) [118]	33 (4.7) [113]
H	7-9	142	141	40 (6.5) [151]	14 (4.9) [129]	31 (4.2) [119]
I	8-5	135	138	37 (6.0) [131]	n.a.	n.a.
J	7-10	145	130	34 (5.4) [136]	8 (3.0) [103]	28 (3.2) [106]
K	7-4	151	155	50 (8.3) [160]	20 (6.5) [160]	37 (5.5) [149]
L	8-4	139	131	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
M	8-5	134	153	48 (7.9) [152]	n.a.	n.a.
N	7-9	134	151	45 (7.3) [160]	12 (4.3) [121]	28 (3.2) [106]
O	8-0	134	136	51 (8.5) [159]	13 (4.6) [115]	35 (5.2) [122]
P	8-0	142	128	43 (6.9) [141]	11 (4.0) [108]	29 (3.6) [104]
Q	8-5	119	134	56 (9.6) [160]	19 (6.3) [134]	32 (4.5) [114]
R	7-5	154	125	39 (6.3) [160]	12 (4.3) [131]	26 (2.8) [109]
S	8-8	134	133	37 (6.0) [127]	12 (4.3) [108]	29 (3.6) [101]
T	7-8	155	160	47 (7.7) [160]	10 (3.7) [113]	29 (3.6) [110]
U	8-1	144	157	57 (9.9) [160]	25 (7.4) [146]	32 (4.5) [114]
V	7-11	137	127	34 (5.4) [136]	9 (3.3) [107]	30 (3.9) [115]
W	8-2	139	131	43 (6.9) [141]	14 (4.9) [118]	30 (3.9) [107]
X	8-0	145	142	49 (8.1) [154]	19 (6.3) [134]	28 (3.2) [99]
Y	8-1	139	152	48 (7.9) [152]	n.a.	n.a.
Z	8-0	143	130	48 (7.9) [152]	12 (4.3) [112]	31 (4.2) [110]
AA	8-0	134	116	47 (7.7) [150]	12 (4.3) [115]	29 (3.6) [104]
BB	8-9	133	122	51 (8.5) [155]	18 (6.1) [128]	37 (5.5) [122]

Notes: Age is age at time of testing. All IQ scores are on Stanford-Binet except Child G whose score is on the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI). Reading, spelling, and arithmetic scores are on the Wide Range Achievement Test. The first score is the raw score; the figure in parentheses is the grade level; and the figure in brackets is the standard score. n.a. indicates that the data are not available.

Table 1a

1974 and 1975 IQ Scores and Reading, Spelling, and Achievement
Scores for Non-Astor Program Children (n=12)

Child	Age	1974 IQ	1977 IQ	Reading	Spelling	Arithmetic
A	8-6	n.a.	123	42 (6.8) [140]	25 (7.4) [143]	35 (5.2) [122]
B	7.3	n.a.	145	43 (6.9) [160]	14 (4.9) [140]	37 (5.5) [149]
C	8-5	132	124	35 (5.6) [126]	10 (3.7) [105]	30 (3.9) [107]
D	7-11	130	137	33 (5.2) [133]	7 (2.6) [98]	33 (4.7) [126]
E	7-11	120	126	35 (5.6) [137]	10 (3.7) [113]	29 (3.6) [111]
F	7.3	n.a.	139	43 (6.9) [160]	11 (4.0) [127]	30 (3.9) [125]
G	8-4	133	141	44 (7.1) [143]	20 (6.5) [136]	33 (4.7) [117]
H	8-2	121	129	34 (5.4) [124]	10 (3.7) [105]	28 (3.2) [99]
I	7-3	n.a.	141	41 (6.6) [160]	13 (4.6) [136]	29 (3.6) [121]
J	8-0	128	125	42 (6.8) [140]	13 (4.6) [115]	33 (4.7) [117]
K	7-6	125	126	41 (6.6) [151]	15 (5.2) [133]	29 (3.6) [111]
L	8-0	128	120	33 (5.2) [122]	11 (4.0) [108]	30 (3.9) [107]

Notes: Age is age at time of testing. All IQ scores are on Stanford-Binet. Reading, spelling, and arithmetic scores are on the Wide Range Achievement Test. The first score is the raw score; the figure in parentheses is the grade level; and the figure in brackets is the standard score. n.a. indicates that the data are not available.

On the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT), the Astor Program children scored higher than the Non-Astor Program pupils on Reading and Spelling tests but did not do as well as the Non-Astor Program pupils on Arithmetic. On the WRAT Reading Test, the AP children's mean raw score was 45.11; the mean grade level, 7.57; and the standard score, 149.07. The NAP children's mean raw score on reading was 39.18; the mean grade level, 6.28; and the standard score, 142.72. While these differences are "substantial," they proved not to be statistically significant. The Astor

Table 2

Comparisons of Means of Astor Program and Non-Astor Program Children
on IQ Scores and Reading, Spelling, and Arithmetic Achievement

Test or Sub-Test	Astor Program (n=28)	Non-Astor Program (n=12)
<u>Stanford-Binet</u> IQ Scores	137.35 (S.D. 13.04)	132.0 (S.D. 8.28)
<u>Goodenough Draw-a-Person</u> IQ Scores	125.19 (S.D. 12.84)	121.16 (S.D. 19.48)
<u>WRAT</u> Reading Scores		
Raw Scores	45.11 (S.D. 6.7)	39.18 (S.D. 4.21)
Grade Level	7.57	6.28
Standard Scores	149.07	142.72
<u>WRAT</u> Spelling Scores		
Raw Scores	14.3 (S.D. 4.28)	13.54 (S.D. 4.73)
Grade Level	4.92	4.65
Standard Scores	123.3	123.09
<u>WRAT</u> Arithmetic Scores		
Raw Scores	30.82 (S.D. 2.72)	31.45 (S.D. 2.68)
Grade Level	4.07	4.23
Standard Scores	113.32	118.54

Program children scored higher than the Non-Astor Program sample on the WRAT Spelling Test. The AP mean raw score on spelling was 14.3; the mean grade level, 4.92; the standard score, 123.3. The NAP mean raw score on spelling was somewhat lower (13.54); the grade level, 4.65; the standard score, 123.09. The difference between the two groups on spelling was not very great and, as with reading, was not statistically significant. On the WRAT Arithmetic Test, the Non-Astor Program sample scored higher than the Astor Program. The NAP mean raw score on arithmetic was 31.45; the mean grade level, 4.23; and the standard score, 118.54. The AP children's mean raw score on arithmetic was slightly lower (30.82); the mean grade level, 4.07; and the standard score, 113.32. These differences were not statistically significant.

Both the Astor Program and the Non-Astor Program children were above grade level in reading, spelling, and arithmetic-- as would be expected in terms of their scholastic aptitude. They are well-above grade level in reading and above grade level but less so for spelling and arithmetic. The differences between the two groups are substantial in the area of reading only and even in that area the difference is not statistically significant.

Almost all of the Astor Program children (26 of 28) indicated a favorable or very favorable attitude toward school while only two reported neutral or ambivalent feelings (i.e., "sometimes like it, sometimes don't"). None of the respondents from the Astor Program expressed totally negative or unfavorable attitudes toward school. Six of the nine Non-Astor children expressed similar positive feelings with three voicing ambivalent or neutral feelings.

When asked what they liked most about school, a particular school subject (especially mathematics) was mentioned most frequently (13) by the AP group. Almost as frequently mentioned (11) was some specific aspect of the school or the classroom such as materials, facilities, or independent work opportunities. Two children mentioned their peers and one the teachers. The NAP children also mentioned a specific subject and especially mathematics most frequently (6) with the teacher or principal (3), other children (2), and "no homework" (11) also mentioned. The major difference between what the two groups liked most about school seemed to be in the identification of aspects of the program structure or design-- aspects which were specific to the Astor Program.

The Astor Program identified three categories about equally as things which they disliked most about school. These included school or classroom conditions (e.g., "too noisy" or "too hot" or "too far away"), "bad" children, a particular school subject (again, especially mathematics)-- six mentions for each. An equal number (6) had no major dislikes about school. Other items mentioned less frequently included the teacher or principal (3) and the nurse, lunch, and getting shots (1 each). About a third of the Non-Astor Program children gave other children in the school or classroom as the thing they disliked most about school. Other items mentioned with equal frequency (2 each) included a particular school subject, the teacher, class conditions (e.g., noise or heat). Two NAP students had no dislikes. Again, the dislikes of the two groups parallel one another except for the mention of other children-- possibly non-gifted-- in the NAP responses.

The favorite subject of both the AP (12) and NAP (8) groups appears to be mathematics with reading mentioned with the second greatest frequency (AP-6, NAP-2). Other subjects mentioned by the AP group included

art (3), science (2), French, writing and contract (1 each). The only other subject mentioned by the NAP children was science (2).

With respect to identifying their "worst" subject, 7 AP and 5 NAP children responded that they had "none." Social studies, science, and mathematics each received 4 mentions by AP pupils; French and reading, 3 responses each; and spelling and contract, 1 each. Three NAP children mentioned mathematics as their worst subject while science, writing, and playtime received one response each.

Twenty-seven of the 28 Astor Program children felt that they were learning a good deal at school, three of them qualifying their positive responses with a "most of the time." Only one AP child responded negatively, observing that he knew "most everything already." All of the Non-Astor Program children except one thought that they were learning a great deal at school. The one exception felt that she did not learn a lot at school but did at home.

Although there were no negative responses to an inquiry as to whether the things learned at school were interesting, four AP and 3 NAP expressed some qualifications, but supplied no specifics concerning their reservations.

A majority of the Astor Program children (21) indicated that there were things in school that troubled them or made them angry. The item with the greatest frequency was the behavior of other children in the class. Other items included the quantity or difficulty of the school work (4), the behavior of the teacher or the principal (3), and self-failure (1). Similarly, 8 of the Non-Astor Program children cited other children's behavior

as a source of anger for them. Also mentioned were the behavior of the teacher or the principal (2) and "too much hard work" (2).

In both the Astor and Non-Astor Program groups, a large majority (21 and 8 respectively) indicated favorable attitudes about their teachers, most reporting "liking" their teachers or feeling that they "learned a lot from them." Five AP and 3 NAP children expressed very favorable attitudes. The remaining children (2 AP and 1 NAP) suggested either a neutral "not sure" or an ambivalent opinion. There were no negative or unfavorable responses by the children. Clearly, both groups feel quite positive about their teachers.

Asked, however, whether they preferred working with the teacher or with other children, the majority (19) of the Astor Program children definitely preferred working with their peers. A small number (6) preferred working with the teacher and (3) had no preference. In contrast, the Non-Astor Program expressed preference for peers or teachers or no preference and equal number (4) of times each.

The majority of the Astor Program children (18) reported favorable (e.g., "O.K.," "good," "alright") relations with their classmates and four AP children report "very good" or "excellent" relations. None of the AP children indicated negative or unfavorable relations with their classmates although six expressed neutral or ambivalent feelings. One NAP student indicated very favorable relations while another indicated very negative ones.

At school, a large majority of the Astor Program children (17) indicated "many" as opposed to just a few friends while eight reported

only a "few" friends. Three AP children and two NAP children responded "half-and-half" or "in the middle." The Non-Astor Program children equally to the alternatives with five children indicating having "many" friends and five "only a few."

Almost all of the Astor Program children (24) expressed the view that they were treated the same as other children in the class. They based their responses on moral expectations of the teacher-- e.g., "teachers wouldn't treat children differently." The four who thought they were treated differently from other children in the class seemed to base their responses on their physical attributes-- e.g., "No, because I'm the tallest" or "I'm the fastest." In the Non-Astor Program group, there was a split with seven children responding affirmatively and five negatively. Most of the negative responses were based either on the teachers viewing them more positively ("...doesn't yell at me as much") or on the teachers' greater expectations for achievement ("...have more work to do than the others").

Almost all of the children in both group (24 AP and 12 NAP) viewed themselves as "good students." Those who did not respond affirmatively saw themselves as good students "sometimes." A large majority (20 AP and 7 NAP children) felt that through harder work they could be better students. A much smaller number (6 AP and 2 NAP) responded with a "maybe" and 2 AP and 3 NAP did not think they could be better students. "Work harder" was the frequent qualifier for both groups.

A majority of both groups (17 AP and 8 NAP) indicated that they preferred to do things on their own while a small number in each group (7 AP and 3 NAP) preferred not to work or do things on their own. The remainder responded with "sometimes."

When asked what changes they would like to see in school, the most frequent response (9 AP and 5 NAP) was "none." The second most frequent response (5 AP and 4 NAP) suggested changes in the behavior of the "noisy" or the "bad" children. Other Astor Program children responses suggested more time for free work (4), fewer rules (3), more play time (2), changed teacher behavior (2), different lunch structure (2) and cleaner bathrooms (1). The Non-Astor Program children suggested changes in school structure (e.g., less work) or in school activities (e.g., more parties).

Seventeen of the Astor Program children did not feel that school work was too easy for them while seven felt that it was sometimes. Only four AP children felt that school work was too easy. With the Non-Astor Program children, five felt it was not too easy, four thought the work too easy, and three indicated that it was too easy sometimes.

Both groups responded overwhelmingly (24 AP and 8 NAP) that they had ample opportunity for creative self-directed work. The Astor Program children indicated that such opportunities were built into the classroom design while the Non-Astor Program children felt that it was contingent upon their completing their required assignments. This difference was one of the few which emerged from the interviews-- the Astor Program children viewing self-directed work as part of their program while the Non-Astor Program children had to complete required assignments before they could undertake creative independent activities on their own.

Findings from Children Related to Home and Family

When asked what special things the child and his parents did together, the Astor Program children reported taking trips to museums and attending plays (9), followed closely (8) by playing games. Other responses included "nothing special" (6), school work (4), and going to the movies (4). For the Non-Astor Program children, playing games (4), trips to museums (3), school work (2), celebrate holidays (1), and "nothing special" (2) were reported. Essentially, there were no real differences between the two groups regarding the special things they do with their parents.

A majority of the Astor Program children (22) responded affirmatively when asked whether they get "bad marks" in school while the majority of the NAP (7) answered negatively. Most of the AP Children (9) reported that "nothing happened" when they received poor grades. Other AP children reported that they "felt bad" (4), were "yelled at" (3), became angry (2), or were punished (1). The Non-Astor Program children who reported receiving poor grades suggested that either they or their parents "felt bad" (2), that they were "yelled at" (1), or nothing happened. The Non-Astor Program children reported receiving fewer poor grades than the Astor Program children but the consequences which followed appear to be the same for both groups. Also, it was not possible to check on the accuracy of the reports of school grades received by the children.

When asked what happened when they received good marks in school, both groups indicated that they or their parents felt proud and happy (13 AP, 8 NAP). Other responses by the Astor Program children were "nothing happens" (8), rewarded with food or money (5), praised or

encouraged verbally (2). The Non-Astor Program children, like their AP peers reported gifts (2), praise or encouragement (1) or nothing (1). Again, there were more commonalities than differences in the responses of the two groups.

Both the Astor Program and the Non-Astor Program children reported essentially the same three activities as things they liked to do at home: play (20 AP and 5 NAP), watch television (9 AP and 4 NAP), and read (4 AP, 4 NAP). Two AP children reported liking to draw and one to sew. The NAP children reported liking to write (1), draw (1), and daydream. The most common answer by the Astor Program children to the thing they disliked doing at home was housework (11), followed by homework (6), and nothing (5). Other less frequently mentioned responses included playing (2), fighting (1), eating (1), and going to bed (1). The most frequent answer by Non-Astor Program children regarding things they disliked doing at home was homework (4). This was followed by housework (2), playing (2), going to bed (1), eating vegetables (1) and being yelled at (1). Although there was variation in the frequency and order, both groups seemed similar with respect to things they disliked doing at home.

The most frequent category given by both groups as what they liked to read about most was mystery and adventure stories (12 AP, 4 NAP), especially Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys stories. Other categories mentioned by the Astor Program children included comic books (4), space stories (4), and animal stories. The only other category mentioned more than once by the NAP children was animal books (2). Science fiction and church books were mentioned once by children in both groups. Both AP and NAP children appeared to have a wide range of reading interests with mystery and

adventure topping the lists. The majority of children in both groups (18 AP, 8 NAP) reported reading a good deal at home. A smaller number (9 AP, 4 NAP) reported reading "not so much" at home. There were no real differences in the reported home reading habits of the two groups.

The majority of children in both groups (16 AP, 8 NAP) reported watching television two hours a day or more. Cartoons was the category of TV program mentioned as "favorite show" by 10 AP and 7 NAP children with situation comedies listed as second. Other favorites reported by the AP children included science fiction (4), TV specials (3), movies (2), sports and game shows (1). The NAP children also mentioned science fiction (3), sports (3) and soap operas (1). There were no obvious differences in the TV viewing habits of the two groups.

There appeared to be no differences between the groups in terms of having special hours for homework. Nineteen Astor Program children and 10 Non-Astor Program children reported that they had no such special hours.

Twenty-one Astor Program children perceived their parents' involvement with their school as "just a little" or "not at all." The others (7) reported at least one parent-- usually the mother-- involved "a good deal." In contrast, four Non-Astor Program children reported that their parents were involved a lot; three, a little; and 2, not at all. Three of the NAP children reported having no idea how much their parents were involved in school. Considering the extent of known involvement of parents in the Astor Program, the perceptions of the children may not be entirely accurate.

Half (14) of the Astor Program children reported preferring to do things alone rather than with the family; nine preferred doing things

with the family, while five had no preference. The Non-Astor Program children were distributed somewhat differently: five preferred doing things with the family; four, by themselves; and three had no preference.

Where there were siblings in the family, most of the children in both groups (16 AP, 8 NAP) felt that they were not treated the same as their brothers and/or sisters. However, most of differences in treatment expressed by the children were related to special privileges associated with age differences (e.g., stay up later, yelled at because they are older).

Most children in both groups (21 AP, 8 NAP) reported favorable or very favorable relations with the children in their neighborhoods. Of the remaining AP children, all but one (6) reported neutral or ambivalent relations while the remaining one indicated unfavorable relations with the children in his neighborhood. Of the NAP children not reporting favorable relations, most (3) reported unfavorable relations as opposed to neutral or ambivalent ones. Both groups, however, seemed to have basically favorable relations with other children in the neighborhood.

When asked whether they preferred to be in charge or to let others make decisions, Astor Program children tended to reject both of the alternatives and suggested that they preferred to make decisions cooperatively (13). Eight of the AP children preferred to be in charge and seven preferred letting others make decisions. Eight of the Non-Astor Program children, on the other hand, preferred being in charge, two preferred letting others make decisions while the remaining two favored cooperative decision making.

Most of the Astor Program children preferred playing outside the home with others (21) as contrasted with playing inside (5). Only two

expressed no preference. The Non-Astor Program children, on the other hand, responded equally to playing outside (5) or not having a preference (5). Proportionately, the Astor Program children preferred playing outside the home more than did the NAP children.

Findings Related to Children's Self Perceptions

When asked what they felt they could do best, the Astor Program children mentioned school subjects, play games, and sports equally frequently (6 each). The only other response mentioned more than once was "draw" (4). The Non-Astor Program children mentioned mathematics, sports, and "don't know" three times each and draw, play, and "make cat sound imitations" once each. The most common response to what they felt they did worst was "nothing" or "don't know" (12 AP, 4 NAP). The second most frequent mention in both groups was mention of a particular school subject (7 AP, 3 NAP). The only other response mentioned more than once by the AP children was sports (2). The NAP children mentioned sports and fight (2 times each) as things they did worst.

With respect to a question about what other persons thought the children could do best, the most frequent response in both groups (8 AP, 5 NAP) was "don't know" followed by mention of a particular school subject- (7 AP, 3 NAP). Other things mentioned by the Non-Astor Program children-- possibly with considerable facetiousness-- were "everything" (2) and "talk"(2). The Astor Program children mentioned run, sports, and "everything." As for what others thought the children did worst, the majority in both groups (15 AP , 11 NAP) responded with "don't know" or "nothing." Five AP children suggested a particular school subject. The one other NAP response was "fight."

When asked how they felt when they were "unable to do things," the most common response by the Astor Program children was "bad" (11), followed by "mad" and "sad" (5 each) and "not bad" (4). Other feelings expressed by the AP children (1 each) included "dumb", "bored", and "don't care." In the Non-Astor Program children, the most frequent response (4) was "don't know" followed by "mad or angry" and "not bad" (3 each). Overall, the Astor Program children appeared to feel more negative when unable to do things than the Non-Astor Program children who tended to feel more uncertain.

The most frequent response given by children in both groups (12 AP, 5 NAP) when asked what they did when unable to do something was to keep trying or to try harder. The second most frequent response (7 AP, 3 NAP) was to ask for help. Other responses by the AP children were "do something else" (6), get angry, go to one's room, or nothing (1 each). Other things mentioned by NAP children were get angry, something else, nothing, or don't know (1 each).

The majority of children in both groups (18 AP, 10 NAP) felt that they were different from other children, although a larger percentage of the NAP felt this way than the AP group. Of the Non-Astor Program children who did feel different, seven felt smarter than their peers or that they worked at a faster pace than others in school. The others felt different in terms of looks, personality or strenght (1 each). In contrast, the Astor Program children tended to view their differences less in terms of intellectual ability or academic performance (5) and more in terms of appearance (3), personal preferences (3), treatment by others (2) and age (3).

Differences Between Astor Program and Non-Astor Program Children

The interviews indicated more similarities in the responses of the Astor Program and Non-Astor Program children than differences. As pointed out earlier, the sample size did not warrant any statistical analysis of the data but inspection suggests differences in the responses in the following areas:

1. Astor Program children seemed to feel that the design and structure of their classes (facilities, equipment, contract and independent work opportunities, etc.) were among the things they liked best about their school-- much more so than the Non-Astor Program children who focused on such other things as particular subjects or peers.
2. Astor Program children seemed to express a definite preference to work with other children rather than the teacher whereas the Non-Astor Program children apparently prefer working equally with both the teacher and other children.
3. The Astor Program children generally tended to report having many school friends whereas an equal number of Non-Astor Program children reported having few school friends as did having many school friends.
4. The Non-Astor Program children reported feeling that they did not get treated the same as other children in their class with a much greater frequency than the Astor Program children. In addition, the Non-Astor Program children felt that the differential treatment was related to their being "smarter" (i.e., greater achievement expectation) or better behaved than other children. The Astor Program children tended to view the differential treatment more to non-academic or behavioral variables (e.g., fastest or tallest in class).
5. The Non-Astor Program reported feeling that the school work was too easy

- for them more frequently than did the Astor Program children.
6. The Astor Program children reported having received "bad marks" or "poor grades" more often than the Non-Astor Program children, most of whom claimed never to have received a poor grade. It was not possible to ascertain the accuracy of these perceptions.
 7. Astor Program children reported that their parents were not involved or only slightly involved with their schools much more frequently than did Non-Astor Program children.
 8. Most of the Astor Program children reported preferring doing things alone rather than with their families while the Non-Astor Program children reported the opposite.
 9. Most of the Astor Program children preferred making decisions cooperatively rather than being in charge or letting others do so while the Non-Astor Program children preferred being in charge themselves.
 10. Astor Program children reported preferring to play outside with others (as opposed to playing inside) more frequently than did the Non-Astor Program children, most of whom preferred playing inside or both inside and outside.
 11. The majority of the Non-Astor Program children did not report having negative feelings (sad, bad, dumb, mad, etc.) when unable to do things, but claimed to feel "not bad" or "uncertain." The Astor Program children, on the other hand frequently reported negative feelings when unable to do things.
 12. Non-Astor Program children reported feeling different from other children more frequently than did the Astor Program children. The Non-Astor Program children viewed their differences from other children more on greater intellectual and academic abilities than the Astor Program children

who focused more on non-intellectual and non-academic variables such as appearance and personal preferences.

These differences, however, do not provide any patterns of differences between the children in the two groups. Again, the size of the sample of Non-Astor Program children is small and generalizations cannot be drawn.

Findings from Interviews with Astor Program and Non-Astor Parents

For each of the children interviewed and tested, one or both parents were also interviewed at the same time. An interview schedule was developed and used with each of the parents.

The parent(s) had originally "applied" for admission of their child to the Astor Program and had obviously believed that the child was gifted. The first question asked the parents what had led them to believe the child was gifted-- "What kinds of things did he/she do to prompt your identification of the child as gifted?" As expected, there was much overlap between the two groups. The three most popular responses for each of the groups were: read early (24 AP, 6 NAP), kindergarten or nursery school recommendation (27 AP, 9 NAP), and very verbal/spoke early (15 AP, 7 NAP). Other common responses were: good memory (10 AP, 2 NAP), artistic (7 AP, 3 NAP), long attention span (4 AP, 2 NAP), creative and musical (4 AP, 1 NAP, each), liked games and puzzles (6 AP, 1 NAP), unusual coordination (3 AP, 1 NAP), logical or philosophical (3 AP, 5 NAP), practical and curious (3 AP, 5 NAP), exhibited math ability (2 AP, 3 NAP), energetic and daring (2 AP, 1 NAP) and, finally, easily directed in childhood

tasks such as toilet training and feeding (3 AP, 3 NAP).

Responses which were peculiar to the Astor Program parents included: knew Sesame Street things (10), bright older sibling(s) (6), large child (2), happy, good sense of humor (3), tri-lingual (1) and symbolic recognition (1). Two responses were unique for the Non-Astor Program parents: socially adept (1) and competitive (1).

Some parents indicated that they perceived differences which they did not initially identify as characteristic of giftedness. Astor Program parents noted social peculiarities (1), unusual need for encouragement (2), suspected emotional problems (3) and late reading (2) as matters for concern. Two parents from each group expressed doubt that their children really were gifted and one Non-Astor Program parent was not sure until the child had entered school.

When asked to describe ways in which they had fostered the development of their children, there was a much smaller number of responses but still considerable overlap between the two groups. The three most popular responses were: exposure to resources and trips (24 AP, 12 NAP), access to books and materials (18 AP, 6 NAP), and always shared interests and was willing to discuss (16 AP, 5 NAP). Less common responses were: read to child (6 AP, 3 NAP), involved in activities and lessons (3 AP, 2 NAP). Responses peculiar to the Astor Program parents included: provided social training (1), stressed value of intelligence (1), and a twin (1). Two categories of response limited to Non-Astor Program parents were: encouraged child (6) and taught school skills (1)

In association with the fostering development of the child, parents who did not mention television were asked about the degree of control

they exercised and their child's favorite television programs. The majority of parents of both groups (14 AP, 8 NAP) reported that they screened programs to some extent and limited viewing to 2-3 hours per day. A small number (5 AP, 3 NAP) discouraged television viewing or strictly controlled what the child watched. The remaining parents in both groups (7 AP, 1 NAP) did not restrict viewing in either time or program selection. Educational programs such as Zoom, Electric Company, and Sesame Street (9 AP, 8 NAP) and cartoons (8AP and 5 NAP) were identified as the most popular shows. The only other program mentioned by the Non-Astor Program parents was Welcome Back Kotter. Programs mentioned more than once by Astor Program parents included Star Trek (4), Six Million Dollar Man (3), Sports Specials (3), Happy Days (3), and Game Shows (2). Nine programs were mentioned once each by the Non-Astor Program parents and ten were mentioned once by Astor Program parents.

In response to the question about parental awareness of special community programs and resources for children and whether their children were involved in these programs, there was considerable overlap between the two groups. Sports (14 AP and 6 NAP) and regular attendance at zoos and museums (14 AP and 3 NAP) were the most frequent responses. Other common responses included: "Y" programs (5 AP, 3 NAP), arts and crafts programs (6 AP, 4 NAP), dancing lessons (3 AP, 4 NAP), music lessons (6AP, 6 NAP), scouting programs (9 AP, 4 NAP), library programs (1 AP, 2 NAP), youth groups (1 AP, 1 NAP), and church programs (1 AP, 4 NAP). Programs identified by Astor Program parents only included: Fresh Air Fund (1), camping (1), playground (1) and Wonderama (1). Non-Astor Program parents identified chess club (1), science club (1), and poetry contest (1).

When asked if the child knew that he/she was gifted, the majority of both parent groups (26 AP, 10 NAP) indicated that their children did know they were "gifted." One Astor Program refused to respond to the question, objecting to the term "gifted." The most popular response to the question why they believed the child knew he/she was gifted for the Astor Program parents was that the child was "aware of special classes for bright children" (6) and that the child "realized that he/she is more intelligent than his/her peers" (5). Similarly, the Non-Astor Program parents responded that the child "compares self to classmates" (7). Less common responses were: "has been told so" (1 AP, 2 NAP), and "feels flashes to solve problems" (1 AP). Only a small number (5 AP, 2 NAP) did not feel that their children were aware of being gifted. One Astor Program parent reported not knowing whether the child was or was not aware.

The majority of both parental groups (14 AP, 8 NAP) thought their children were indeed perfectionists and that this caused problems either at home or in school. The problems mentioned most frequently were: "gives up easily" (9 AP, 4 NAP), "stubborn" (2 AP, 3 NAP), "angry and frustrated" (12 AP, 9 NAP), "depressed and withdraws" (2 AP, 1 NAP). Parents indicated how their children handled the frustration involved in losing a game or a contest as follows: "short period of anger" (16 AP, 5 NAP) followed by "handles it well" (6 AP, 4 NAP). Other Astor Program parent responses included: "physical means" (2), "cries" (1), and "never loses at home" (1). Additional Non-Astor Program responses included: "denies failure" (1), "vengeful" (1), and "hysterical" (1).

With respect to regularity of homework, the parents of the Astor Program at the Brooklyn School reported homework as much more common

at the Brooklyn class than in the Manhattan one but the majority (16) reported that homework was irregular. The majority of Non-Astor Program parents (10) reported that their children had homework on a regular basis. Seven Non-Astor Program parents indicated that their children had a regular time to do homework. Nineteen of Astor Program parents reported not setting aside a specific time for homework. Homework was regularly checked by both groups of parents (18 AP, 7 NAP). In some of the classes in which the Non-Astor Program children were assigned homework, the signature of a parent on the homework was required.

Almost all of the Astor Program parents (26) felt that the program had nurtured their children's development. Three of the parents were ambivalent about the school's nurturing their children and one parent felt it had not done very much. The most common responses to a question about how the school had nurtured development, the most common responses were: enrichment (15), homogeneous grouping (10), teachers (8), independence/structure (7), social awareness (3), and enjoyable situation (3). The facilities and administration of P.S. 6- Manhattan were singled out by several parents. On the other hand, the need for more structure and school skills was mentioned by three parents.

In contrast, the four Non-Astor Program parents who had positive feelings about the school's nurturing the development of their children were parents of children in independent or parochial schools. The remaining children, those whose parents had negative or ambivalent feelings about the nature and extent of nurturance of the child's development by the school expressed displeasure at the lack of enrichment (7), the failure

of teachers to allow bright children to progress at their own rates (6), the poor facilities (2), and the overcrowded conditions (1). Three Non-Astor Program parents with mixed feelings, ascribed these basically to the teachers' abilities to overcome some of these obstacles. Except for those parents whose children were in independent or parochial schools, there was general dissatisfaction with the efforts schools were making for the development of these gifted children.

When asked for general impressions of their children's school experiences, all but one of the Astor Program parents expressed a positive one. The remaining parent's view was not one of dissent or a negative impression but rather an explanation that the parent had no basis for comparison. There were some expressions that the Astor Program had "declined" (3) and "could be improved" (3). One parent thought that there had been general improvement in the program this past year. The Non-Astor Program parents, on the other hand, had somewhat less positive impressions about their children's school experiences with some mixed (2) and some negative (3). Among those who had positive impressions about their children's school experiences were the four parents whose children were in independent or parochial schools, two who had moved to suburban New Jersey communities (who were previously negative), and two who seemed to feel that their children were well enough adjusted to benefit from all but the worst school circumstances. In all cases, parents felt that teachers recognized their children's giftedness. Only seven believed that the principal was also aware of the child's giftedness.

Twenty-four of the Astor Program parents responded positively to a question about whether there was an IGC (Intellectually Gifted Child)

class at the school, referred to the offer of continuing at the schools where the Astor Program classes were located. However, since a good many of the children had to travel considerable distances to reach the schools, the majority (16) were still undecided about keeping their children in these schools. This is especially true for parents who have found IGC classes in neighborhood schools much closer to home. As for the Non-Astor Program parents, all but one seem to feel that they will leave their children at the schools they are presently attending. In some situations, the children will enter IGC classes, however.

The parents of all twenty-eight Astor Program children expressed satisfaction with the educational opportunities being provided their children. The most important facets were thought to be exposure (8), enrichment (8), homogeneous grouping (8), philosophy/structure (7) the teachers (6), teacher-student ratio (5), social factors (4), Dr. Virginia Ehrlich (3), P.S. 6 (3), and, whimsically, the price (1). Gaps and problems mentioned by these parents included: budget cutbacks (2), the teachers (7), and insufficient discipline (1). Several items were mentioned both as positive factors and gaps or problem areas. These included such aspects as competitiveness and non-competitiveness and the teachers were mentioned as both a strength and a weakness.

For the Non-Astor Program parents, three of the four whose children were involved in independent or parochial schools were generally satisfied with the educational opportunities provided. The remainder were either ambivalent or dissatisfied. The bases for the dissatisfaction were expressed as follows: can't proceed at own pace (7), absence of

enrichment (6), quality of teaching (4), and boredom, poor overall program, not enough parental involvement, and too expensive (1 each). The parents of the children in independent and parochial schools who did express satisfaction with educational opportunities provided specified such aspects as second language, religious instruction, enrichment, and guided instruction. Clearly, the Astor Program parents were much more satisfied with the educational opportunities provided their children and were able to specify some of the aspects of such opportunities they felt were most important.

Almost all of the Astor Program parents (25) felt that their children were being sufficiently pressured by the school. Although none felt their child was being overpressured, three parents felt the pressure to be insufficient. More enrichment, individualization, and direction were cited as factors that would improve the situation. Five parents observed that they thought the pressure was "better" during the past year (1976-77) than in prior years. Six of the Non-Astor Program parents felt that the school pressure on their children was insufficient while five, including three of the independent or parochial school parents found the pressure to be quite sufficient. The parents suggested individualization (5), more homework (3), enrichment (1), and stressing the intrinsic values of school (1) as things to be done to improve the situation.

When asked whether they would like their children to skip grades, ten of the Non-Astor Program parents responded negatively and only two positively. The Astor Program parents were much more mixed-- sixteen responded negatively, eight positively, and five were "not sure" about skipping. When asked whether they would prefer their children to skip earlier or later, the majority (8) had no preference, four preferred

skipping in the early grades, and one in the later grades.

Most of the Astor Program parents (25) reported that they were members of the Parents Association but only eight reported satisfaction with its functioning. The remainder expressed dissatisfaction with the demands of fellow parents. The majority (8) of the Non-Astor Program parents reported that they were not members of a Parents Association but would be if one were organized specifically to meet the needs of gifted children.

Parent Ratings of Traits of Astor and Non-Astor Children

A 25-item inventory of personal and behavioral traits of children was administered to the parent(s) at the time of the interview. Two of the items were eliminated when parents found them to be ambiguous. Parents were asked to rate their children on a five-point scale in which a 1 was "low" and 5 "high" in terms of the desirability of the trait or behavior. The number of inventories completed exceeds the number of children in each group since separate inventories were completed by each of the parents when both participated in the interview. Nine Astor Program children had ratings from both parents and three Non-Astor Program children have two inventories. These were studied and analyzed before it was decided to treat and analyze all of the inventories completed in the analysis-- 36 Astor Program and 15 Non-Astor Program.

The mean ratings of the inventories completed by the Astor Program and the Non-Astor Program parents are presented in Table 3. A profile of the two groups' mean ratings is presented in Figure 1. These

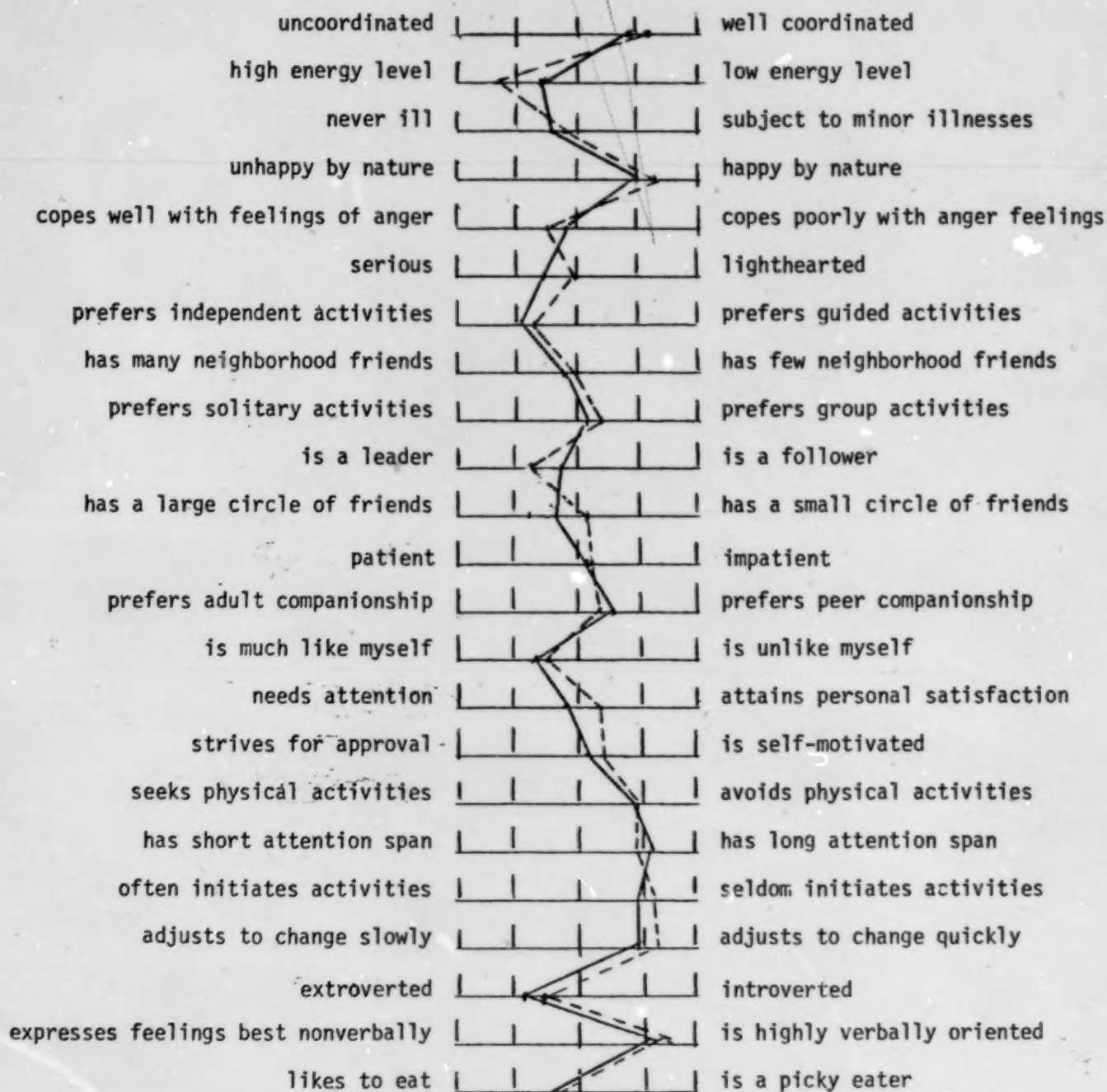
Table 3

Mean Ratings by Parents of Traits of Astor/Non-Astor Program Children

Trait/Characteristic	Mean Astor Program	Ratings Non-Astor Program
uncoordinated/well coordinated	4.08	3.93
high energy level/low energy level	4.17	3.67
never ill/ subject to minor illnesses	3.17	3.47
unhappy by nature/happy by nature	4.36	4.0
copes well/copes poorly with feelings of anger	3.44	3.13
serious/lighthearted	2.97	2.47
prefers independent/guided activities	3.64	3.93
has many/has few neighborhood friends	3.02	3.27
prefers solitary/prefers group activities	3.25	3.07
is a leader/is a follower	3.67	3.20
has large circle/small circle of friends	2.83	3.40
patient/impatient	2.83	2.87
prefers adult/prefers peer companionship	3.39	3.53
is much like myself/is unlike myself	3.47	3.73
needs attention/attains personal satisfaction	3.33	2.87
strives for approval/is self motivated	3.39	3.07
seeks/avoids physical activities	3.89	3.87
has short/has long attention span	3.97	4.13
often initiates/seldom initiates activities	4.17	3.93
adjusts to change slowly/quickly	4.33	3.93
extroverted/introverted	3.78	3.47
expresses feelings best nonverbally/verbally	4.42	4.07
likes to eat/picky eater	3.25	3.47

Figure 1

Parents Ratings of Astor and Non Astor Program Children



were not treated statistically because of the size of the samples but inspection of the means suggests few significant differences, if any, on most of the traits and characteristics. The sum of the mean scores for the 23 items for the Astor Program children was 82.82; the sum of the mean scores for the Non-Astor Program children was 80.48. Thus, the overall mean score for the Astor Program is 3.60 as compared to an overall mean score for the Non-Astor Program of 3.50.

For the most part, the ratings suggest far more similarities than differences. The range of differences of mean scores for the 23 items was from .02 to .57 with all but five of the items differing by less than .36 on a five-point scale. The items on which there were differences of .40 or more included:

1. High energy level/low energy level (difference of .50). Astor Program children rated higher on energy level than Non-Astor Program. Both groups were toward the high end.
2. Serious/lighthearted (difference of .50). The Astor Program children were rated somewhat more lighthearted than the Non-Astor Program children although they were just about the mid-point (2.97).
3. Needs attention/attains personal satisfaction (difference of .46). The Astor Program children were rated somewhat higher in terms of attaining personal satisfaction than the Non-Astor Program children.
4. Has large circle/small circle of friends (difference of .57). Here the Non-Astor Program children were rated as having a larger circle of friends than the Non-Astor Program children with the difference between the mean ratings of the two groups the largest of the 23 items.

5. Adjusts to change slowly/ adjusts to change quickly (difference of .40). The Astor Program children were rated as adjusting to change more quickly than the Non-Astor Program children although both groups were rated toward the high end of the scale.

In these five items, as with other items, there was a range of response, usually the ratings were spread across the five points. While the parental ratings tended to cluster, they did spread out across the whole range in most instances.

Summary and Conclusions

The Astor Gifted Child Studies Program is an early intervention program for young gifted children. Although the program has expanded considerably from the two classes opened in March 1974, the program is still not able to handle all of the children who qualify as gifted as determined by a high score on an individual test of intelligence. The motivation for this study was a concern with what happens to children identified as gifted who are not involved in a systematic school experience such as that provided by the Astor Program. Does their development suffer as a result of not being provided an enriched educational experience?

Unfortunately, a valid answer to the question is not possible from this study. It was not possible to implement the original design-- i.e., to locate 30 children from the two original Astor Program classes and match them with an equal number of children who were equally qualified but not accepted for the classes for one reason or another. As it turned out, a total of 37 Level III Astor Program were identified and 28 of them

participated in the study. However, the pool of equally qualified children proved to be much smaller than anticipated. A total of 24 children were identified but only 12 participated in the study. The other 12 either could not be located or their parents refused to cooperate, usually because the child had not been selected for the program in the first place. The result was that the sample of Non-Astor Program children proved to be much smaller than anticipated and too small to treat statistically. Certainly the children could not be matched on a one-to-one basis as planned. Furthermore, half of the Non-Astor Program children had been enrolled in independent or parochial schools in the city or in suburban schools outside the city where the parents believed their educational development would be nurtured to a greater degree than in the normal city elementary school.

The mean age of the Non-Astor Program sample was six months younger than that of the Astor Program sample. The mean IQ scores for the two groups differed-- the Astor Program mean IQ on the Stanford-Binet test was 5.35 points higher and 4.03 points higher on the Goodenough Draw-a-Man test. Both groups, however, were functioning in the "superior range" on both tests. On the Wide Range Achievement Test, the Astor Program children's mean on Reading and Spelling but lower on Arithmetic. Except for reading where the Astor Program children's mean was more than a year higher than that of the Non-Astor Program children (AP grade level 7.57; NAP grade level 6.28), the differences in spelling and arithmetic were minimal. In reading, both groups were substantially above grade level. In spelling and arithmetic, they were approximately two years above grade level. It was not possible to gain access to school records to examine the academic achievement of the two groups of children as manifested

by teacher grades, standardized achievement test scores, anecdotal records or other evaluative data. The perceptions of both the children and their parents concerning academic achievement and development were solicited through interviews, but these tend to be subjective and, in some ways, even less satisfactory than data derived from the cumulative records.

Through the structured interviews with children and their parents, perceptions concerning school, home, peer relationships, cultural resources, and, in the case of the children, self-perceptions, were sought. A rating form was used to ascertain the perceptions of the parents of their children on 23 traits or behaviors. The data from these interviews and the rating forms are reported above.

Based on the perceptions in the responses of the children and their parents, the two groups appear to be much more similar than dissimilar. These similarities appear with respect to attitudes toward school and school related activities, toward home and family, toward peers, and even toward self. There were some differences between the two groups as suggested by the interview responses. These differences are not sufficient to form a pattern. They include the following:

- Astor Program children liked the program design and structure while the Non-Astor Program liked a particular subject or their peers rather than the school program.
- Astor Program children prefer working with other children while the Non-Astor Program children have no preference working with either other children or teachers.

- Astor Program children have many school friends; the Non-Astor Program children are divided equally between those who have many and those who have a few.
- The Non-Astor Program children feel that they are not treated the same as other children in the class and that the differential treatment is due to their being "smarter" or better behaved. Astor Program children attribute any differential treatment to non-academic or behavioral variables.
- Non-Astor Program children report feeling school work as being too easy, far more often than do the Astor Program children.
- Astor Program children report receiving "poor marks" often while the Non-Astor Program claimed never to have received poor grades.
- Astor Program children report their parents less involved with school activities than did the Non-Astor Program children.
- Astor Program children preferred doing things alone rather than with their families; Non-Astor Program children reported preferring to do things with their families.
- Astor Program children prefer making decisions cooperatively while Non-Astor Program children prefer being in charge themselves.
- Astor Program children prefer playing outside with others; the Non-Astor Program children either preferred playing inside or had no preference.
- Astor Program children reported that they had negative feelings when unable to do something. The Non-Astor Program children claimed they felt "uncertain" under those circumstances.
- Non-Astor Program children reported feeling different from other children more frequently than did the Astor Program children, the differences being in greater intellectual and academic abilities.

It is possible that these differences stem from differences in the experiences in the school setting which individuals would have in a total class of gifted children in contrast to situations where only one or two children are gifted. However, there is insufficient data to warrant such a conclusion.

The interviews with parents provided data on what had led them to identify the child as gifted, the kinds of things they did to foster the development of the child, parental guidance regarding such things as homework and television viewing, attitudes toward school and instructional programs, and parent involvement in school activities. The parents also completed an inventory of personal and behavioral traits of the child. Here again, the similarities seem to be greater than the differences. Perhaps the greatest difference between the Astor Program and Non-Astor Program parents seems to be in the dissatisfaction among the latter group with school. Four of the twelve sets of parents interviewed had enrolled their children in independent or parochial schools and two had moved to the suburbs where they had enrolled their children. They had done this, apparently, in order to find better educational opportunities for their children than they thought would be provided in the regular public school which made no provision for gifted children as were made in the Astor Program. Both sets of parents appear to be trying to foster the development of their children in the same ways although the Astor Program parents have the program in common and are involved through parent meetings and conferences.

In general, there appear to be more similarities than differences between the Astor Program and Non-Astor Program children, based on the

perceptions in the responses of the children and their parents. However, to draw the conclusion that the Non-Astor Program children did not suffer in their development as a consequence of not participating in the Astor Program is not warranted. No conclusions can be drawn both because of the inadequacy of the sample and, equally important, the limitations in the data collected..

It has been advocated, for example, that the teaching-learning situation for the gifted should emphasize experiences which serve the following purposes:

1. Arouse and maintain the questioning attitude, the inquisitive mind.
2. Develop understanding of the problem-solving process, of the tools and know-how of research, and of the resources available in problem-solving.
3. Motivate and develop ability to think critically, reflectively, and objectively.
4. Foster independence of work and study.
5. Result in early mastery of foundation skills necessary for advanced specialized endeavors.
6. Build a consistent system of values.
7. Nurture the desire for creative expression.
8. Build skills in conceptualizing, generalizing, and synthesizing meanings.
9. Build the necessary competencies in an area of talent.¹

¹ A. Harry Passow, "Enrichment of Education for the Gifted," in Education for the Gifted, edited by Nelson B. Henry. 57th Yearbook, Part II, National Society for the Study of Education. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958. pp.198-199.

It could be that the Astor Program, specifically designed to nurture the development of intellectually gifted children, emphasizes experiences aimed at the above behaviors. It was not possible to assess the developments of the Astor Program or the Non-Astor Program with respect to those behaviors and achievements. It could well be that with respect to the basic skills areas, there were no real differences. However, there could possibly be differences in these other areas of development-- areas with which the Astor Program presumably is concerned. Non-Astor Program could suffer as a result of not being provided enriched educational experiences in these areas. However, the data available are inadequate to answer the question.

Although it is disappointing not to be able to provide a clear, firm response to the research question raised, the data available are of considerable interest. Test data, interviews with children, and interviews with their parents are available for a group of forty young intellectually gifted children-- a sample and data bank far larger than have been available on young gifted children before. Combining the Astor Program and Non-Astor Program samples into one provides us with a survey not previously available and as such, provides us with a portrait of young gifted children and their parents which should be useful to educational planners and researchers.